

AUTHORIZING THE CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN NAVAL
VESSELS

FEBRUARY 21 (legislative day, JANUARY 29), 1951.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BYRD, from the Committee on Armed Services, submitted the
following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 1001]

The Committee on Armed Services, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 1001) to authorize the construction of modern naval vessels, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment, and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the bill is to expedite the modernization of our Navy through the increased construction of new vessels and the conversion of existing vessels.

EXPLANATION OF THE BILL

During the last session of the Eighty-first Congress, the Navy was given authority under the provisions of Public Law 674 to inaugurate a modernization program which it was understood would take several years to complete. Subsequent to the enactment of that legislation the international situation worsened, and the Navy was directed to expedite its construction program so that its status by the end of fiscal year 1952 would be adequate to meet the current defense requirements. Had the program been continued under normal circumstances it could not have been completed before fiscal year 1955. The program has the unanimous approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Department of Defense, and the Bureau of the Budget.

The end of World War II found the Navy with numerous ships of various types, most of which were designed and developed prior to the war, but the greater proportion of which were built during the war. The lessons of World War II and subsequent advances that have been

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made in technical fields have made it mandatory that the Navy develop new prototype vessels to keep abreast of the changing conditions. The modernization of many of its existing vessels by the inclusion of more modern weapons and equipment offers an economical method to partially solve the problem. This does not eliminate, however, the immediate requirement to lay down other vessels to be built in many cases to new and radical designs.

The bill authorizes a total of 140 major new vessels weighing approximately 500,000 tons, and the conversion of 292 vessels. The cost of the program is \$1,070,949,000 for new construction and \$1,297,143,000 for conversion, totaling \$2,358,092,000. The ammunition necessitated by this program will cost approximately \$382,000,000.

The emphasis of the program is laid upon the improvement of the aircraft carriers and the development of vessels to meet the problems of antisubmarine warfare and mine sweeping. Included in the program is authority to construct a new type of carrier, which is a larger and more modern version of the so-called Midway class. This carrier is designed to permit the operation of modern aircraft carrying very heavy bomb loads. It will be a prototype vessel and after service tests will permit the Navy to build additional vessels of the same type if the need for such craft is indicated. The carrier will have increased catapult and arresting equipment, larger elevators and higher hangar deck overhead in order to accommodate larger and faster planes. It will also carry additional protection and in every way is designed to meet the requirements of modern warfare. The committee took notice of the fact that this carrier replaced the much disputed "super" carrier which was canceled by the former Secretary of Defense. The committee inquired of the witnesses appearing before it as to whether they were presenting the views of the Department of Defense. The record clearly shows that the construction of this carrier was recommended by the Department of Defense and was based upon a unanimous recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The bill in section 4 places a prohibition on the disposal, in any manner, of combatant vessels in specified categories without the specific approval of the Congress. This in effect sets aside the provisions of various laws under which the Navy has transferred combatant vessels to other nations, including the military aid program. This is not intended to cast any reflection on the disposals that have been made to South America or other friendly nations.

Section 5 of the bill rescinds certain of the outstanding authorizations presently held by the Navy. It is the opinion of the committee that this is an incomplete approach to a problem which must be solved at the earliest possible moment. Checks indicate that there are many additional authorizations still outstanding under which the Navy could construct or convert tonnage which makes it extremely difficult for the committee to visualize just what is the current situation insofar as authorization to construct vessels is concerned.

Accordingly, the Navy Department has been instructed to submit to the Congress at the earliest possible date legislation which will clean up all outstanding authorizations which are not needed to implement the present program. The committee was informed that such legislation has been drafted and is in process of being cleared by the

executive branch for submission to the Congress. For this reason the committee does not intend to recommend any change in section 5 of the bill as it passed the House but fully expects that this plan of canceling old authorizations be completed in a systematic manner within the shortest time possible.

The committee does not believe that it should list in detail the types of ships being constructed or the characteristics of such vessels. On the other hand, after careful questioning of the Chief of Naval Operations and other witnesses from the Navy Department, it is convinced that the program is necessary and that it represents merely a further implementation of the long-range program which had previously been inaugurated.

In compliance with subsection 4 of rule XXIX of the Standing Rules of the Senate, there is herewith printed in parallel columns the text of provisions of the existing law which would be amended by the provisions of the bill:

EXISTING LAW

THE BILL

THE ACT OF JULY 26, 1950 (PUBLIC LAW 621)

AS AMENDED

Sec. 408 (e) (1). The President may, from time to time, in the interest of achieving standardization of military equipment and in order to provide procurement assistance without cost to the United States, transfer, or enter into contracts for the procurement for transfer of, equipment, materials or services to: (A) Nations eligible for assistance under title I, II, or III of this Act, (B) a nation which has joined with the United States in a collective defense and regional agreement, or (C) any other nation not eligible to join a collective defense and regional arrangement referred to in clause (B) above, but whose ability to defend itself or to participate in the defense of the area of which it is a part, is important to the security of the United States: *Provided, * * **

SEC. 4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, as amended, or the provisions of any other law, no battleship, carrier, cruiser, destroyer, or submarine of the United States which has not been stricken from the Navy Register as provided by section 2 of the Act of August 5, 1882 (22 Stat. 296), as amended, or any interest of the United States in any such vessel, shall hereafter be sold, transferred or otherwise disposed of unless authorized hereafter by the Congress.

SEC. 5. The balance of tonnage authorizations remaining in the following Acts is hereby rescinded:

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EXISTING LAW

THE ACT OF DECEMBER 17, 1943 (PUBLIC LAW 204, 78TH CONGRESS)

That the Secretary of the Navy is hereby authorized to acquire and convert or to undertake the construction of two million five hundred thousand tons, or such portion thereof as may be directed by the President of auxiliary vessels and one million tons of landing craft and district craft, such auxiliary vessels, landing craft and district craft to be of such size, type, and design as the Secretary may consider best suited for the prosecution of the war, such vessels to be in addition to those heretofore authorized.

SEC. 2. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Act: *Provided*, That no sums expended by the Maritime Commission from funds appropriated to it for the construction of vessels which are transferred to the Navy shall be reimbursed from naval appropriations, except to the extent of agreements existing on the effective date of this Act: *Provided further*, That vessels acquired by the Navy from the Maritime Commission without reimbursement shall not be disposed of except by return to the Maritime Commission.

THE ACT OF JULY 9, 1942 (PUBLIC LAW 665, 77TH CONGRESS)

That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to acquire and convert or to undertake the construction of one million two hundred thousand tons of auxiliary vessels of such size, type, and design as he may consider best suited for the purposes of national defense, such vessels to be in addition to those heretofore authorized.

SEC. 2. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Act.

THE BILL

(a) The Act of December 17, 1943 (Public Law 204, Seventy-eighth Congress).

(b) The Act of July 9, 1942 (Public Law 665, Seventy-seventh Congress).

EXISTING LAW

THE ACT OF MAY 24, 1941 (PUBLIC LAW 72, 77TH CONGRESS)

That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to acquire or convert or to undertake the construction of five hundred and fifty thousand tons of auxiliary vessels of such size, type, and design as he may consider best suited for the purposes of national defense, such vessels to be in addition to those heretofore authorized.

Sec. 2. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Act.

ACT OF DECEMBER 17, 1941 (PUBLIC LAW 353, 77TH CONGRESS) (THIS ACT AMENDS THE ACT OF MAY 24, 1941) (PUBLIC LAW 72, 77TH CONGRESS)

That Public Law Numbered 72, Seventy-seventh Congress, approved May 24, 1941, is hereby amended by deleting the words "five hundred and fifty thousand tons" and inserting the words "one million three hundred and fifty thousand tons" in lieu thereof: * * *.

THE ACT OF MAY 26, 1943 (PUBLIC LAW 61, 78TH CONGRESS)

That the Secretary of the Navy is hereby authorized to acquire and convert or to undertake the construction of one million tons of landing craft and district craft of such size, type, and design as he may consider necessary and best suited for the conduct of amphibious operations, for service to the fleet and shore-based forces, and for naval districts, stations, bases, and operating areas at home and abroad, such craft to be in addition to all auxiliary vessels or craft heretofore authorized.

Sec. 2. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Act.

THE BILL

(c) The Act of May 24, 1941 (Public Law 72, Seventy-seventh Congress) as amended by the Act of December 17, 1941 (Public Law 353, Seventy-seventh Congress).

(d) The Act of May 26, 1943 (Public Law 61, Seventy-eighth Congress).

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THE BILL

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, at the City of New York, in the first session of the first Congress, passed the following bill:

That the President of the United States be and he shall be, the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States; he shall have the Honor and Power of suspending the Execution of all Laws passed by the Congress, and he shall have the Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for all Crimes and Misdemeanors except Treason, Felony, and Breach of the Peace, subject to the Advice and Consent of the Senate.

He shall have the Power to nominate and to receive, and to appoint and to receive, Ambassadors, Ministers, Consuls, Judges, and all other Officers of the United States, who shall be appointed and receive their Commissions from him, and he shall have the Power to receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers.

He shall have the Power to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall have the Power to make such Regulations as may be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Executive.

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